The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Prov. 9-10

There is always some little disputation as to point between modern in colors darker than it used to wear, and then on times like the present, when pinning onto stimulate that tendency, we get to thinking of some of our fellow mortals as if they were absolute fiends. This very mind is common over our vindictive brain, which probably is not very good for us.

We have a feeling that it would be a pleasure to us to see certain men suffer about the worst torment we can conceive of, in punishment for their sins. That is really not a good feeling in Christ. The attempt of man to handle the vengeance which belongeth only unto God, has been, in itself the source of untold mischief.

Moreover it becomes very hard for us to see anything bright in the future before us if we lose our faith in human nature. When we think of men as being totally bad, or any such scale, what can we stand to as a foundation for better things in days to come? Why may not this species of modern sinners, any people, at any time, or what guarantee do we possess that our own race can ever work its way out into fields of settled fair righteousness?

If we can do so, with reason, it is used to our interest to form interpretations of conduct which avoid the hypothesis of a kind of devilish cunning and cruelty seated in the human heart, and delighting in works that deface and destroy all that is fair and good. Indeed, when we think carefully about the matter, we shall find that this hypothesis is itself the height of unreason. It makes many more problems in human life than it can be used to explain.

The machinery of our life is exceedingly complex and easily gets out of balance, when it is quite likely to begin to deliver a terrible product. But this does not mean that the mechanism was designed to do evil, that it has been so altered and changed as to be forever incapable of doing good, or so damaged as to be helpless of repair. It means that if the proper balance can be restored it will begin to work again as it was originally intended to work.

Just thinking at this moment of the policy of frightfulness which has been inaugurated as part

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of this were going on beyond the seas. We know the Calvinists on the strength of testimony that on an enable to impeach that faithful Church have been committed there for the purpose of inspiring terror in the hearts of a large population not directly engaged in the strife. It is very dreadful to us to know that such things are being done, and we can only be a little puzzled to understand how they can be done by human beings on any principle whatever. It rather seems to us that men must have sunk to the lowest possible moral estate before they are capable of committing such atrocities.

But it is not necessary to resort to this supposition as an explanation. Even very well meaning people can get themselves into a frame of mind when it seems to them proper and right to do such things. They think they must be cruel only to be kind. There is a type of character which almost altogether by its logical theories; all its moral feelings being easily pushed on side, in order that some doctrine which it has formed may be carried out in its full extent.

Some quite famous examples of this might be given. It is impossible for example to call John Calvin in any sense a bad man, yet he was responsible for having Servetus burned at the stake because of his religious belief. He could not have wished to do that deed, but the logic of his own conscience led him to commit him to the action, as he was thereby cut from true to him to his logic as neither when it led him. Indeed he could not have tempted that religious doctrine to which his reason became attached but he cancelled the natural feeling and decision of his heart. He consulted nothing but the voice of reason and the strength bound him to the atrocious deed.

I suppose our Protestant training may have led us to think of the men who hunted the Lamas of the Inquisition as the very type of the Reformation, as if they were monsters of iniquity delighting in the tortures and death of their fellow creatures. But it is not true. They were educated and cultivated men,

according to the best standards of their day and time. But they had thought that themselves obliged to break men upon the rack, and when them publicly burned in order to prevent a worse misdeed that might come upon themselves and mankind.

They doubtless seemed themselves a little like the surgeon who before the discovery of anesthetics cut off a limb to save life, hardening his heart to the cries of the patient upon whom for the moment he was inflicting awful pain.

I think, if we come to be just we ought to view these examples to help us interpret what is now taking place. We are to apply to ourselves and to our brothers. The probability is known that like many others before them they have a thing to say and the vigor of the theory blinds their eyes, in some measure, to the real nature of their action.

We can say of them, as Jesus said of those who bound him to the cross, "they know not what they do." This does not render their deed any less horrible in our eyes, but it does relieve us from a situation out of which retaliation would be the only feasible path.

If men had been actually transformed into tigers there would be but one thing for us to do, that is hunt them out of existence, or into such holes and corners of the world that they should cease [illegible].

But if such deeds proceed from men whose mental machinery is, for the time being, out of balance, or out of focus, we may have good hope that some kind experience will lead them to recover a sane view of existence and resume the humane habit of mind which will make them once more good friends and neighbors.

But this notion of this obsession that has fallen upon them rather prompts us to examine a little the theory of life by which they have been visited. This may lead us into somewhat abstruse questions, but they are questions with which it is high time that we should begin to deal in a more understanding way; and they have a good deal to do with the idea of religion that was professed which consideration gives us a right to speak of them here.

The policy of frightfulness is based I suppose on the affirmation that the world is ruled by fear. The one way to keep men in order is to keep them in fear. That is by no means an uncommon idea, and this world is very full of its exemplars. Many people have this as their only thing about dealing with crime. The one thing they know to do about that is to make the criminal or prospective criminal afraid.

Consciously or unconsciously religion contains to spread abroad the same impression that God governs men through fear. The only way he can restrain them from evil is to put them in terror, by acts of vengeance from which they shrink.

Now let this be the ruling idea of a set of people, who on themselves come to consequences in this matter of dangerous situations when they are trying to protect themselves; especially if they happen to be people of a somewhat Thornlink or Doctrinaire habit of mind, and the policy of frightfulness is quite likely to appear in full blown proportions.

It is rather beside the mark to say that this is the brute, left over in the human, showing its ferocity and ruthless strength. It is something rather worse than that, so far as immediate consequences are concerned, though not so bad when we come to talk of recovery from such madness.

It is a tense and high strung mind, itself in fear of what may happen to it, trying to protect itself by inspiring fear; and so intent

upon carrying out, to the full, its thing of what must be done, that it is for the time blind to its ~~[illegible]~~ broader implications of its own acts.

The brute himself is seldom, if ever, cruel in his cruelty. Cruel strength is never so ferocious as is conscious weakness when it finds itself in a narrow place. The policy of frightfulness originates in a mind which is at bottom very doubtful of being able to carry through its schemes, and which knows no other way to success save that of frightening the whole world out of its path.

But what shall we say of this notion of the rule of fear? To what end, if any, is the world governed in that fashion, and what is the moral value of fear as a ruling influence in the human mind? One is tempted to say that it has no moral value whatever; that it is always, but for men to live in fear, and that however the ruling powers of the world, human or divine, may resort to it as a temporary expedient, in the end it makes things worse rather than better to fill any heart with terror.

This probably would be a somewhat unbalanced judgment of the case, and yet there is much excuse for thinking that of nothing else has mankind so much reason to be afraid as of fear itself. Men who live much under its sway are invariably dwarfed and shrivelled up, both mentally and morally, so that it is impossible for them to make any progress toward a higher civilization.

The persecuted races ~~[illegible]~~ as a rule have not been able to make headway in a manly development. It has not worked in the same way with all oppressed peoples, since it does not follow that because a man is in danger he is always afraid. Some small nations have been exceedingly heroic under the heavy hand of despotic rule, and were not to be frightened by anything short

ground might be to obtain first in the degree to which human nature has fallen a victim to error it has generally been impossible for the pursuit of higher aims

Very probably that has come the result with the whole race from the fact that since the dawn of history they have chosen themselves in their action but little the advance themselves in any path of progress, the influence of emotion seems that they are often found to occupy a inferior position,

It seems to be remembered however that as far back as we know anything about Africa it has been peculiarly exposed by other races in pursuit of slaves, the nations have always dwelt in abject terror because of this foreign slave raider, and even their own kings often sold their subjects into slavery that they might obtain

A race thus handicapped never has had a chance to show what it could do in other skills in the scale of being. It seems to have been a long time since it had left. To know what capacity it has to enter the pathway of a higher life, it must be given some opportunity to work out of it if the results which appear from time to time are to catch the pace at which the rest of the world is moving,

A religion consists chiefly of form, claims in one world, is but an only but for some, they could live well off without any religion, to speak of, as with a child any impression dwelling upon the power of the Almighty, or in a state of panic about the question by which they suppose themselves surrounded,

No people with a debased religion ever did come to much, and this is no fair ~~prospect~~ ~~with people~~ ~~comparison~~ ~~with~~ much, till they get rid from the awful weight of superstition that is upon them, ~~they~~ may produce a certain sensitiveness of mind, but it is hopeless that inspire men to go forward; and all hope must depend on the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ the enlightened mind,

There fact in no obvious upon the surface

of life that one does not see how it is possible for any thoughtful person to be conscious of the divine and yet undervalue being one of them. If God's own method of governing men were to make them afraid it seems rather plain that never under His rule could one see how climbed so far up the steps of light as it has come.

But when we have arrived at this point in our reflections, it occurs to us to ask why, if fear is so bad an influence, a good and wise Providence ever allowed the world of men to become so full of it. Why should human nature have been made to be so easily bound and overborne by its fears. If they could serve no purpose in the upbuilding of its higher life?—

This question may send us back to the animal world beneath us. To see how it is there. Curiously enough we find that world also like our own full of fear; but we discover that its effect there is good and not bad. That is to say instead of hindering development it helps it on and tends to improve the quality of life rather than lower it.

Almost every wild animal lives in a continual state of fear. Hardly for an instant does it lose its sense of the peril by which it is surrounded, so very faculty that it possesses is constantly alert to detect danger and the feeling of a lurking foe is never absent from its consciousness.

Yet there is no evidence that animals suffer from this or that the existence is in any degree painful to them, and one can how we doubt that it sharpens all their wits as it actively promotes their physical activity and energy. Here is a world ruled by a kind of fear in which no person seems to lurk, and while so far from being saddened by the shadow of danger resting upon it, is if anything brightened and inspired by it to put forth its utmost powers.

The difference in our own case may very well be made by our higher gift of imagination. The

that with an unjust knowledge of what the risks of life are we shall find it an easy task to subdue our anxiety, and whether we can or cannot do this, I am here more desirous to point out what human fear is always likely to be.

They who think the world is to be ruled by fear must consider a little more carefully the kind of weapon they are handling. In so far as they can make men afraid, really fill their hearts with terror, they merely plunge them into a morbid state when they are incapable of coming to sound good. In so far as they fail of their purpose, and the minds which they bully and threaten refuse to be scared, they are attempting a harder task than faith has. They are piling up obstacles in their own way which will even prevent them from governing anybody or anything.

These observations have equal application in our households, our schools, our society, and on the broad field of international life. The rule of fear among men has but a very limited use and length. The parents who rule by fear are likely to find their children infinitely keener if they succeed in this endeavour, and to lose all influence over them if they fail.

In our attempts to overawe crime by the severity of our punishments, we continually make men angry and ugly a type of mind already in rebellion against our social order, and perhaps increase that rebellion quite as fast as we can overawe or subdue it. For a nation to adopt the policy of frightfulness may seem at some temporary advantage: but that will weigh but little in the end against the disadvantage of plucking down upon itself the ~~[illegible]~~ of mankind.

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We seem to have lost sight utterly of the ancient proverb with which we began, But